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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - DECEMBER 30

REF: Kinshasa 1163

¶11. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

Security Situation

¶12. (SBU) According to MONUC sources, DRC Minister of Defense Charles Mwando Nsimba and FARDC Chief of Staff Didier Etumba met with the full range of North Kivu commanders on December 29. Etumba confirmed to MONUC that FARDC and CNDP forces outside of Goma remained only 700 meters apart. Etumba told MONUC that FARDC troops would not advance "one inch," but Mwando added they would also not retreat.

¶13. (SBU) PARECO forces reportedly chased a small group of CNDP troops from the town of Mwalimbi, and then proceeded on a looting spree. MONUC has increased patrols in the area, which is north of Masisi, to send a clear message to PARECO and the various Mai Mai militias that increasingly assertive and predatory actions by these groups will not intimidate MONUC.

¶14. (SBU) MONUC has identified and located some 15 different Mai Mai groups in North Kivu. According to MONUC, the groups operate primarily in FDLR-controlled territory, but they tend to ally themselves with PARECO forces, rather than with FDLR, when engaging the CNDP. MONUC sources opined that, while many Mai Mai forces originally provided community defense functions, they have increasingly turned to looting in the absence of state authority.

¶15. (SBU) A UN Human Rights Office team visited two prison cells in Kiwanja, confirming that the CNDP holds eight adults and a 13-year old boy in detention. Attempts to negotiate the boy's freedom were not successful. CNDP officials refused access to another prison facility in Rutshuru, claiming it was strictly for prisoners of war.

LRA - Operation Lightening Thunder

¶16. (SBU) On December 26, LRA soldiers reportedly killed 89 people during an attack in Doruma, located 25 miles from the Sudanese border. A Ugandan military spokesman reported finding an estimated 45 individuals, who had been massacred, inside a Doruma church. USAID/DART sources said that Ugandan and South Sudanese troops have deployed to Doruma, but the LRA apparently occupies seven nearby villages.

¶17. (SBU) According to USAID/DART sources, the LRA also attacked the

town of Gurba on December 27, killing an estimated 60 people.

¶18. (SBU) Following the LRA attack on Faradje (reftel), all of the city's 30,000 residents fled into the forest, according to USAID/DART sources. LRA soldiers apparently burned down 120 houses, looted businesses, residences, and the hospital in Faradje. The rebel group also kidnapped at least 20 children, according to local sources. A USAID/DART member plans to travel to Faradje on December 30 to assess the humanitarian situation.

¶19. (SBU) FARDC CHOD Etumba told MONUC that FARDC forces participating in Operation Lightening Thunder would protect the civilian population, while UPDF forces would hunt down the fleeing LRA troops. MONUC continues to provide lift capabilities to move FARDC forces to the area.

¶10. (U) Radio Okapi quoted an OCHA spokesman who claimed that the LRA has killed nearly 200 people in various attacks since Christmas. NGOs, including WFP and Caritas, have distributed foodstuffs to 3,600 households totaling 18,000 IDPs in the region.

Humanitarian Situation

¶11. (SBU) UNICEF's water-trucking operations in Goma continue, benefiting approximately 12,000 displaced people residing in schools, hangars, and churches. UNICEF partners are also constructing latrines and showers, as well as distributing soap at 23 IDP sites in Goma. UNICEF partner Solidarites also began trucking water to a makeshift IDP camp near the MONUC base in

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Kiwanja.

¶12. (SBU) In recent weeks, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has delivered approximately 80,000 liters of potable water to the Kibati IDP camps. ICRC continues to repair and improve the water-supply system in Sake to benefit IDPs and the town's 30,000 residents. Similar efforts are underway in Vitsumbi (Rutshuru Territory), and near Butembo (Lubero Territory).

GARVELINK